

Message Text

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SUBJ: MEMBERS OF CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM COMMISSION ANNOUNCED

REF; KATHMANDU 5299; KATHMANDU 5162

1. PALQFE FEBRUARY 9 ANNOUNCED FORMATION OF COMMISSION TO "DISCUSS AND RECOMMEND APPROPRIATE CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM WITHIN SIX MONTHS." COMMISSION MEMBERS ARE AS FOLLOWS: ANIRUDRA PRASAD SINGH (CHAIRMAN). SINGH IS RESPECTED JUDGE AND FORMER AMBASSADOR TO UAR. CONSIDERED TO BE MODERATE IN POLCHICAL BELIEFS.

KIRTI NIDHI BISTA. FORMER PRIME MINISTER, ADVOCATE OF REFORM OF PANCHAYAT FRANCHISE, MODERATE.

RAM HARI SHAR. FORMER NATIONAL PANCHAYAT CHAIRMAN,(MEMBER OF POLITICAL REFORM MOVEMENT HEADED BY T.P. ACHARYA. SHARMA HAS BEEN ACTIVE IN NUMBER OF LEFT-WING CAUSES (FREE CHILE COMMITTEE, NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WORLD PEACE, ETC.).

DHUNDI RAJ BHANDARI. CHAIRMAN OF BACK TO VILLAGE CAMPAIGN AND LOYAL SUPPORTER OF PANCHAYAT SYSTEM

SRIBHADRA SHARMA. MEMBER OF SECRETARIAT OF NEPALI CONGRESS
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PARTY, FOLLOWER OF SUBARNA SHUMSHERE'S MODERATE WING OF

NCP.

D.P. ADHIKARI. LONG TIME LEADER IN COMMUNIST PARTY, PRO-CHINESE FACTION, NOW ALIGNED WITH T.P. ACHARYA.

DR. MOHAMED MOSHIN (SECRETARY OF COMMISSION). MOSHIN WAS MEMBER OF THREE MAN PALACE COMMITTEE STUDYING CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM. A LAWYER, MOSHIN IS THOUGHT TO BE ONE OF NEPAL'S ABLEST ADMINISTRATIVE MINDS, DRAFTER OF NEW EDUCATIONAL POLICY WHO HAS ALSO RECENTLY SERVED AS MEMBER-SECRETARY OF NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL COMMITTEE.

2. COMMENT: COMPOSITION OF REFORM COMMISSION IS SURPRISINGLY LIBERAL. ADHIKARI, RAM HARI SHARMA AND SRIBHANDRA SHARMA HAVE BEEN STRONG ADVOCATES OF EXTENSIVE REFORM. WE WOULD EXPECT THAT THESE THREE WOULD FORM ONE FACTION, WITH BISTA, SINGH AND BHANDARI ON THE SIDE OF ONLY MODERATE CHANGES IN PRESENT PACHAYAT SYSTEM. KEY VOTE WOULD BE HELD BY MOSHIN WHO IS CONSIDERED A "100 PERCENT PALACE MAN." WHILE KING CERTAINLY HAS ULTIMATE POWER OVER COMMISSION'S DECISIONS (HE CAN SIMPLY REJECT RECOMMENDATIONS IF NECESSARY), COMMISSION CAN BE EXPECTED TO URGE AT LEAST MINIMUM REFORMS: OPENING NATIONAL PANCHAYAT TO PUBLIC AND ALTERATION OF CURRENT SYSTEM OF FRANCHISE. DECISION TO INCLUDE CONGRESS AND COMMUNIST PARTY LEADERS MAY SIMPLY BE PALWLA EFFORT TO KEEP THEM UNDER CONTROL OVER THE SHORT TERM, BUT KING'S DECISION TO INCLUDE THEM COULD ALSO BE BIG STEP TOWARDS FUNDAMENTAL RECONCILIATION WITH MODERATE NCP ELEMENTS. IN ANY CASE FOR NEXT SIX MONTHS KING HAS CHanneled CONSIDERABLE CROSD SECTION OF OPPOSITION INTO OFFICIALLY SANCTIONED POLITICAL ACTIVITY. THOSE WHO REMAIN OUTSIDE REFORM MOVEMENT ARE PRO-SOVIET ELEMENTS OF CPN, CONSERVATIVE GORKHA PARISHED PARTY AND EXTREMIST FACTION OF NCP IN EXILE. WE WOULD WELCOME EMBASSY DELHI'S VIEWS ON GOI REACTION TO COMPOSITION OF COMMISSION. CARGO

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